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SOCIETY TO ENCOURAGE STUDIES

AT HOME.

HEALTH.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF ROCKWELL AND CHURCHILL, 39 ARCH STREET.

1892.



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SOCIETY TO ENCOURAGE STUDIES
AT HOME.

HEALTH.

*By Miss Anna Eliot Pickner and
Mrs. Ellen Hurietta (Swallow)
Richardson.*

BOSTON:
PRESS OF ROCKWELL AND CHURCHILL, 39 ABOM STREET.
1892.

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These pages are addressed to the Students of the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, to the women living in different parts of the United States, who have joined it for the purposes of home education. Grieved by the amount of ill-health revealed in the correspondence, the Committee resolved to make an appeal in behalf of the laws of health, not only on the usual grounds, but for the sake of the very studies which the Society aims to promote.

Members of the Society, desiring further knowledge, can apply for information about books on health, to the Secretary.

Additional copies of this paper will be sent by the Secretary on receipt of five cents for single copies, or one dollar for twenty-five.

All applications must be sent by mail.

FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

A. E. TICKNOR, *Secretary*.

BOSTON, MASS., Nov., 1878.

The programme of studies, offered by the Society, now includes a section of Sanitary Science, as part of the Department of Science.

A. E. TICKNOR, *Secretary*.

BOSTON, Nov., 1888.

Sanitary Science, as applied to the surroundings of the individual, has made great strides since the first issue of this little pamphlet. The prevention of disease, through better ventilation, water supply, and food, is now fully recognized. A great advance has also been made in physical culture, especially among women. Yet the simple suggestions of the following pages still have their mission to perform in awakening thought on the subject.

A. E. TICKNOR, *Secretary*.

BOSTON, Jan., 1892.

Revised Nov., 1880.

Revised Nov., 1888.

Revised Jan., 1892.

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Between the old ascetic idea that there is virtue in disregarding the body, and the opposite tendency, always common, to indulge the body by luxurious living, lies the truth, — that the human body is a wonderful instrument, on the wise management of which depends our power of accomplishing, through its use, certain objects, held in high esteem by thinking people.

If we wish to live long and comfortably, we must keep the body in good condition. If we wish to rise to enjoyment, or to eminence, intellectually, we must keep the body in a state to serve us well. If we only wish to be useful, happy, and capable of mental progress, we yet need a physical system well cared for, working without friction or disturbance.

The laws of physical health are fixed and uniform; just as inexorable as any laws by which planets move, or plants grow. A knowledge of many of these laws is coming, of late, within the reach of all educated persons; and it is at their peril that they disobey them, or fail to study them.

The chief facts on which rules for health are now based can be found, in a simple form, and very attractively stated, in the "Primer of Physiology," by M. Foster, published by Appleton & Co., New York, tively stated in four excellent little books, published by the London Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, viz.: "Personal Care of Health," by E. A. Parkes; "Food," by A. J. Bernays (one shilling each); "Guild of Good Life" and "Household Health," both by B. W. Richardson.¹ "The Human Body," by H. N. Martin, is also good.² The "Primer of Physiology," by M. Foster, published by Appleton & Co., New York, is also excellent.

¹ E. & J. B. Young & Co., New York.

² Henry Holt & Co., New York.

and we beg all our readers to obtain and read it.¹ Rules founded on well-known facts can be readily reached, in American Health Primers,² in "Home Sanitation, a Manual for Housekeepers,"³ and in other publications whose value can be learned from any well-informed physician.

We do not propose to cover the whole ground, but to bring forward some special points, to which we most desire to draw attention.

I.

Regarding the body, at first, simply as a machine, of which large and important portions are intended for rebuilding and heating purposes, we find that, like all other machines, it requires the fulfilment of certain well-defined conditions, in order that it may do its full work easily. Among these essential conditions are, first, supplies of air, water, and food; and afterwards, cleanliness, that is, the removal of all waste matter, as the condition of most work with least expenditure of force.

"The relative value of these three essentials (air, water, and food) would be differently estimated by many persons; but we have no hesitation in placing air far in advance of food, as a means of preserving health."⁴ We are bathed in air, we breathe air,

¹ Price 45 cts. One of the Science Primers, reprinted from English originals.

² Published by Blakiston, Philadelphia.

³ Published by Ticknor & Co., Boston.

⁴ Dr. George Derby, Mass. State Board of Health, Report, 1873.



every moment. Water and food we take only at intervals, and in comparatively small quantities. Moreover, a person breathing pure air, day and night, can digest almost any quality of food.

In a room thirteen feet square by nine feet high there is only air enough for one person to breathe, without danger, for two hours; yet how many people sleep in rooms of this size, with closed doors and windows, even draw the bedclothes over their heads for warmth, taking in with each breath the poisonous dead matter which is every instant thrown off from the lungs and skin, and then wonder why they have a headache and cannot eat next morning. How often do two or three people sit, for some hours, in such a room, with double windows perhaps, and with no change of air, unless from the momentary opening of a door into another room. If they think at all about it, they suppose that sufficient air comes in through cracks; but the amount that so enters a room is far from sufficient in ordinary circumstances. A great difference in temperature between the outer and inner air, or a violent wind blowing outside, causes a somewhat rapid change of air, even in a well-built house; but only under one of these two conditions should any one sleep, or remain more than one hour, in an ordinary room, without a direct communication with *out-door* air; a door open into another closed room is not enough. A chimney, communicating with the room by an open fireplace is a very important aid to ventilation.

Windows closed with weather-strips, rooms heated by air-tight stoves or pipes, are, therefore, false economy, since they bring doctors' bills and drug-

gists' bills, though they save coal and keep out dust.

Among the most fruitful sources of dangerous air are the following: cellars with uncemented bottoms, often littered with decaying vegetables; open drains about the house; piles of rubbish in the yard; stagnant water near. Bad air from neglected drains causes not only fevers, dysentery, and diphtheria, but asthma, and other chronic troubles. Always fear a smell; trace it to its cause, and provide a remedy. By daily contact with fresh air the sense of smell will become trained for one of its most important uses,—the detection of dangerous air.

Not only circulation of pure air, but some moisture in it, is very important. Does every one know that if the air in a room is very dry, it is worse than useless to heat it above a certain point, for a sensation of chilliness is caused by the evaporation from the skin, created by the hot, dry air? Houses heated by cast-iron air-tight stoves, and badly constructed furnaces, cause this excessive dryness, and also are liable to bring into the rooms the noxious gases of coal. Keep the thermometer at 66° or 68°, with the air pure and moist, and the pleasant excitement of the lungs, quickening the circulation, helps to warm you; and, for the rest, warm clothing is better than heated air.

Another false economy, besides that of excluding fresh air, is that of excluding the sun. The entrance of sunlight into a room changes the quality of the air in a health-giving way, so that in some states of serious illness it acts as a remedy. Every room which can be reached by the sun should be opened to it every day; and the air so vitalized by sunshine

should be drawn into every other part of the house. There is nourishment in sunlight, — even prevention of disease, — and rooms darkened to save carpets and curtains are darkened, also, to *waste* health and life, and, therefore, money.

Water is second only to air, both in the importance of its absolute purity and in the danger of unsuspected contamination. A well-trained sense of smell will often serve in the case of air; but water may be in a condition to cause typhoid fever or diphtheria, and yet give no evidence to the unaided senses. It is now held by the best authorities that at least these two dreaded diseases can be directly traced to bad drainage. The contamination is even conveyed in milk, when, either for dilution or for the washing of cans and pans, water from a foul well has been used, such milk having been regarded as the cause of prevailing fevers in districts supplied by careless milkmen. Not only should wells be protected, but cisterns should be periodically cleaned. Cisterns are, sometimes, left carelessly uncleaned for years, to the great injury of the water. Tanks in houses should also be cleaned; and the rooms in which they are should be kept free from all bad air.

The conditions of soil and rock are so varied, in different parts of the country, that no infallible rule for the safe position of wells can be given. It has been estimated that a well commonly receives drainage from a surface area whose diameter is about three times the depth of the well, although even that distance is not always safe from sources of contamina-



tion (cesspool, drain, or decaying matter). Too great care cannot be taken to secure pure water.

The supply of solid food has, in its due place, an importance far greater than would appear by the very moderate amount of attention it receives. Indeed, it is a strange fact that "our domestic animals are and have been far more favored than their owners in respect to nutrition."¹ The beasts and fowls on a farm, being either articles for the market or creatures relied on for productive labor, are carefully fed, and for a specific purpose,—for strength, for milk, for eggs, etc.,—and most farmers are familiar with the best way of feeding them to develop their greatest market value, so that failure in such matters is very rare; but the same farmers feed themselves and their families according to accidental convenience, and, consequently, weak, dyspeptic men, women, and children are common. "Man suffers more from sickness in all stages of his life than his animals."

Surely this need not be so. If the food of human beings is appropriately selected and suitably cooked,—as is the case with well-cared-for domestic animals,—the work of digestion is rendered easy, and the body is well nourished and made strong.

On the other hand, much disease, and disability, and loss of working power, even premature death, are brought upon us by misadaptation, and unfitting preparation of food.

A farmer, of high intelligence in all the varieties of his vocation,—who watched his animals unceas-

¹ Dr. E. Jarvis, Mass. Board of Health, Report 1874, from which several of the succeeding passages on food are taken.



ingly, and fed them according to their idiosyncrasies, as well as for his own purposes, giving each the special food on which it worked better or throve better, — being met one day, accidentally, by his physician, and seen to be in pain, admitted, on questioning, he suffered so much after his meals that he was almost unfitted for work, and usually lost the whole afternoon. This careful observer of his cattle and fowls had not thought to watch himself, nor had he suspected any connection between his food and his suffering and weakness. Yet the change of one habitual article of food restored him to himself, and enabled him to labor again without interruption or discomfort.

See what this means. See what power women have in their hands. The provider and the cook are life-makers. No office has such control over human power and effectiveness as theirs. "No other position offers the opportunity for mind, heart, and hand to produce such large and desirable results." Women are the house-keepers, and provide and prepare the materials of life, and "we are in their hands to make us what they can and will," strong or weak, active or sleepy, quick-witted or dull and torpid. Yet the woman, although not by nature a skilful house-keeper or cook, often defers her preparation for these offices until she assumes their responsibilities, and sometimes she accepts these while yet immature and unformed in character. If she is able to employ some other person to bear the most important part of her responsibility, — that of preparing the family nutrition, — it is usually a deputy of a lower order of intelligence, and notwithstanding all the far-reaching

results that depend on this class, we find "the carpenters and bricklayers, who build our houses, are paid as much for the work of a day, as the women that *build our lives* are for the work of a week."

One important requirement for solid food is regularity. Another is adaptation or digestibility.

In ordinary health, three meals a day — at such intervals as allow time for digestion, but not for exhaustion — are enough, and not too much. In cases of delicacy more frequent meals, of less amount, may be better; but they should be regular, and the quantity should not be too great.

As to adaptation, it is for women to apply themselves intelligently to the obvious duty of learning to make simple and nourishing food palatable, so that pies, confectionery, hot bread and cakes, pickles and preserves, may not so greatly prevail in the food of people at large; and let them remember not only that good diet is essential to their own ability to work, and that of the men for whom they provide, but that, for the young under their care, *good diet* may be regarded as *an essential of education*.

Let the women reflect how much of the fault lies with them, when neglect, either of regularity or of adaptation of food, results in ill-health to themselves and to those about them.

Finally, we have to speak of cleanliness, or freeing from waste material.

If we take into our bodies half a ton of food and drink in the course of a year, it follows that this weight of matter has been carried out of our bodies by the



four channels of rejection, the skin, lungs, kidneys, and intestines. The work of the skin and lungs goes on incessantly and unconsciously, and is often overlooked and forgotten; but dead matter, poisonous dead matter, is given off from both, minute by minute; hence the necessity of a circulation of air, to carry away the products of the lungs, and frequent bathing to prevent the clogging of the pores of the skin.¹ Duty to one's self and one's neighbors should keep us faithful to the simple duty of a daily sponge bath.

In order to keep all these channels for waste material open and working, *exercise* is absolutely necessary. A brisk walk, or a gentle run of a few rods, will bring a sluggish pulse of 68 up to 120 with vigorous beats, and then the blood rushes along its course sweeping out all collected particles; and if this occurs in pure air, the blood becomes vitalized in its rapid passage through the lungs, and a sense of exhilaration and freshness is the result.

Swimming is an excellent exercise, using almost all the muscles, while the support given by the water renders the circulation through the lungs easier. For some women exercise with the arms is useful, when walking is hurtful; and reading aloud is a good form of exercise, — particularly helping the digestion, — which is not often recognized.

All the muscles should be put in use in the course of every day, that no part of the body may be poisoned by the dead particles being left there.

Clothing should always be thick enough to prevent

¹ For a description of the wonderful construction of the skin see English Health Primer, No. 6 (Baths and Bathing), Appleton, New York, pages 6-12.

the escape of the heat made by the internal furnace ; for that apparatus should not be overtaxed, lest the whole machine be weakened. In warm weather, of course, the object is different, and we seek to facilitate evaporation ; but around the bowels there should always be flannel, and it is wise to have a gauze flannel about the whole trunk of the body, to equalize the evaporation. Clothing should also be light and loose ; and that next the body should be often changed. All clothes worn by day should be left off and *aired* at night ; and night-clothes should be well aired by day. Clothing should be well distributed, keeping the joints and extremities wrapped.

One detail, little observed, is the desirableness of changing the stockings after a brisk walk. If the feet have become wet from the dampness of the ground, it is a common precaution ; but if the walk has heated the body and caused perspiration, so as to damp the stockings, the exposure is almost the same.

It seems scarcely necessary to speak of the great importance of wearing strong, water-proof shoes or boots, — not so tight as to impede circulation, — to keep the feet warm and dry, since their distance from the heat-making centre of the body, and their position among the cold currents near the ground, make them lose heat rapidly, and regain it with difficulty ; yet we must mention it, because it is so little regarded. The circulation cannot be checked in one part, even an extremity like foot or hand, without affecting the whole body,



II.

We all know, however, that the body is not merely a machine, to be moved by some external force. It contains the force that is to move it, and it will never do to consider the mechanical apparatus, without considering the motor power seated in the brain and nerves. The intense interaction, between the brain and the more passive apparatus set in motion by it, is perfectly well known to medical men and physiologists; very little to people in general.

If the mind needs a healthy body for its service, the body also needs an active, healthy mind to act upon it, and there must not be too great a difference between mental and muscular development.

The brain is one of the largest organs of the body; it receives a very large supply of blood, and requires not only abundance, but healthiness, of the blood sent up to it.

The brain, and the nerves through which its orders are carried, not only depend on the other organs for support and service, but return to them good or evil, according to the treatment they themselves first receive. This is far more the case than is usually imagined. Dyspepsia is very frequently a disease originating with the brain, and nervous excitement tells powerfully on the digestion, so that it has been said by a shrewd physician that a violent election increases disorders of that kind. Other chronic troubles are caused or aggravated by the way in which we treat our nerves; and some of these — when, probably, weak or irritated nerves have relaxed or con-

tracted the muscles — are such as only a physician would be apt to trace back to nerve processes.

Nerves and brain may be overtaxed; they may also lack healthful exercise, and, of the two, the lack of it is now thought to be the most productive of insanity. The brain must not be too much stimulated in childhood and youth, before it has reached its proper growth; but it must have every opportunity for development and healthy exercise later, and “the best preventive of mental disease, even in those predisposed to it, is education, or wisely directed mental activity, leading to a knowledge of the proper ways of living.”¹

The laws of special exercise and proper nourishment apply to the brain, as to the rest of the body. Prolonged inactivity of intellect is found to impair the brain itself, and not only do the portions left idle become impaired, but the general health becomes deranged, by the irregularity of nervous action thus produced.

Here we beg for the thoughtful attention of every woman, as each for herself, and many for those under their charge, should consider carefully the various relations of cause and effect that may be telling on their lives.

With regard to the right balance of mental and physical growth, women and girls are subjected to very different habits from men and boys, and for them, especially, this balance needs to be made more equal. By nature the nervous organization of women — particularly of American women — is more sensi-

¹ Dr. C. F. Folsom, Secretary Mass. Board of Health, Report 1877.



tive than that of men, and many things in the present system of education and of living tend to make it still more so.

Contrast the lives of school-girls and school-boys out of school-hours. A boy — not only by his own instinct, but by command of those who wish to get rid of his restless presence in the house — is out of doors every free moment, and usually in active motion. A girl, after school is over, is apt to be told, “You must have some exercise, I suppose, — so go now and take a walk, but do not be gone long; and remember you have an hour's practising to do, and then you must work on the trimming for your dress, or it will not be finished in time.” The girl naturally returns to her lessons with nerves a little more weary than when she left them.¹

After school-days are over, the girls, whom the present system of education — culminating in public exhibition and competition — has left to suffer from reaction, find no natural connection between their school life and the new one on which they enter, and are apt to be aimless, if not listless, needing external stimulus, and finding it only prepared for them, it may be, in some form of social excitement.

School-girls, then, need out-of door life; girls after leaving school need intellectual interests, well regulated, and not encroaching on home duties. “We must suppress the inordinate desire for acquiring knowledge from books and schools in infancy and

¹ Practising on the piano needs to be carefully watched, for various reasons. It is fatiguing to every one; to those who are unusually gifted it is also exciting, and to those who do not love music it is wearisome.

childhood; and stimulate those who have passed their youth to apply themselves with great rigor to mental improvement."

There are women in middle life, whose days are crowded with practical duties, physical strain, and moral responsibility, who need this last injunction; for they fail to see that some use of the mind, in solid reading or in study, would refresh them, by its contrast with carking cares, and would prepare interest and pleasure for their later years. Such women often sink into depression, as their cares fall away from them, and many even become insane. They are mentally starved to death.

On the other hand there are innumerable women, of various ages, in these United States, in this nineteenth-century civilization, whose brains are too active, and who "live on their nerves." The high-strung nerves respond to an eager craving, which, like the mediæval saintly asceticism, puts conscience on the side of work, reasonable or unreasonable. Delighting in the use of their intellects, intensely alive to all kinds of responsibility, desirous to crowd every waking moment with interest and action, these women fancy that, because they enjoy all this, it is right and wholesome. It is no more right and wholesome than over-indulgence in eating and drinking. For them, when the inevitable results come, there must be rest and fresh air; rest *in* fresh air; frequent nourishment; variety of small amusements, acting on the mind as fresh air does on the body; not much direct expression of sympathy. When the normal state is restored, they will know better how to use mind and body as not abusing them.



Endeavor to watch, for yourself and for others, the connection of cause and effect, and the mutual influence of mind and body. Do this with common-sense, avoiding morbid exaggerations, and you will soon learn, first, that the mind must not be excited too early; secondly, that when it has once been awakened by education, it must be wisely fed, like the body, not with confectionery of novels and magazines only, but with something that will nourish and strengthen it. Yet, again, it must take its food at intervals, not continuously; it must not have too much; and brain work must alternate with muscle work.

For women whose time is almost entirely filled with practical work it is a duty to snatch a portion of every day for some kind of brain work that will detach their thoughts completely from their routine of care.

For those whose time is much filled by brain work it is a duty to take the opposite course, and find some mechanical work, or out-door avocation, to change the weight.

For those whose work is sedentary, a study of botany or geology is excellent, as it calls them from their houses, and gives a pleasant interest to their walks.

Take the word of a distinguished physician for the fact that "Nothing is now more sure in hygienic science than that a proper alternation of physical and mental labor is best fitted to insure a lifetime of wholesome and vigorous intellectual exertion."¹

¹ Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, in "Wear and Tear."

And this alternation should not be fitful, but regular, and the mental labor should be systematized. If intellectual exertion is not familiar, it should be taken up gradually, with fixed times and steady increase. The healthiest efforts of this kind are those regulated as to subject and as to periodic intervals, with perseverance in both, and growing from small beginnings to such amounts as will develop the full strength.

A recent English medical writer on hygiene recommends the following distribution of time for all whose hours can be controlled, between the ages of fourteen and twenty, and it is not ill adapted to women of all ages. At this period of life eight hours, at least, out of the twenty-four are required for sleep; three or four might be occupied with meals and rest; and of the remaining eleven or twelve half should be given to mental and half to bodily exercise. The mental and bodily exercise should be alternated, and two hours at a time is quite enough for mental work, if the attention be fixed; the results of the short-time plan, in some schools, showing how much may be accomplished by fixing the attention firmly, for a moderate time, and not over-wearying it.

The same writer urges that young women ought to be physically trained as carefully as men, and that proper development can never come without bodily labor; adding, "I do not think that five or six hours' daily real exercise is one minute too much even for them;" but, after all such exercise, a few minutes' rest should restore the breath and pulse to their



regularity, as proof that there has not been excess.¹

Dr. Mitchell, whom we have already quoted, also says: "To insure perfect health, every tissue, bone, nerve, tendon, or muscle should take *from* the blood certain materials, and return *to* it certain others. To do this every organ must or ought to have its period of activity and of rest, so as to keep the vital fluid in a proper state to nourish every part. This process in perfect health is a system of mutual assurance, and is probably essential to a condition of entire vigor of both mind and body."²

III.

There is still an extremely important division of the subject to be touched upon. This is *the study and acceptance of personal limitations*. For want of this grasp of one's individual situation, many a life is wasted. By a quiet and sensible appreciation of it, many feeble lives and narrow abilities have been made useful, some even distinguished.

Among these personal limitations we shall include some broad ones, which, until we reflect upon them, may scarcely seem personal.

Climate is one of these.

Many different climates are to be found in our country, each having its own evil as well as its good; but we cannot fly from one to another continually, seeking that which for the moment seems to

¹Dr. E. A. Parkes. ²Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, in "Wear and Tear."

be best for us. Neither may we defy the climate in which our life places us; we may not recklessly disregard it, or blindly ignore it, without danger. Again, we should not be discouraged by our climate, and succumb, complaining, as if there were no help for us.

Let each of us find out the dangers of our local climate, and how to guard against them, studying and accepting its limitations, which in this light are surely personal.¹

Every woman has to accept physical limitations, as compared with men; and it is simply folly to defy or overlook them, while a sensible regulation of exertion and of rest will disarm them.

Each one has, also, inherited or acquired peculiarities of health and constitution, as well as personal duties, in the position to which she was born.

If, in the indulgence of her preferences, selfish or unselfish, she defies the laws of health; or if, in order to prove that she is strong and healthy, she commits imprudences which may thenceforward leave her feeble and ailing, she has probably only herself to blame for it, and she may think she is the only sufferer; but, in fact, no one can suffer quite alone, since every invalid is a cause of anxiety and care to others, and the possible transmission, even of nervous diseases, by inheritance, must be borne in mind.

¹ It is a common thing to regard weariness, depression, and some derangement of health in the spring, as inevitable and natural; and it is true that in a northern climate the confinement of a winter life is almost sure to tell on the system; but this need not amount to exhaustion and disturbance. If our lives were wise, and adapted to the demands of the climate, the condition of the system might be far more uniform than it is throughout the year.



Dr. Mitchell speaks of the victims of "neuralgia, weak backs, and the various forms of hysteria,—that domestic demon which has produced untold discomfort in many a household, and I am almost ready to say as much unhappiness as the husband's dram;" and adds, "only the doctor knows what one of these self-made invalids can do to make a household wretched."

A mistaken view of duty is also to be guarded against. It is cowardly to fly from natural duties and take up others that suit our taste or temperament better; but it is also unwise to take an exaggerated view of personal duties, which shuts out the proper care of the mind and body entrusted to us.

Let these remarks sound vague, let us illustrate them.

A woman busy with the cares of her family fails to study, and place at their true value, her duties to her mind as well as to her body and to her household. She makes no mental progress as the years go on, loses the power of companionship with her children, grows discontented and fretful, and passes the last years of her life in dull, ignorant unhappiness. Had she seen the limitations and laws of her physical and mental nature, she would have known that it was not selfish to snatch a half-hour every day for the refreshment of her mind in a botanizing walk, or a quiet time for thinking in the open air, or a locking of her chamber-door while she read two or three pages of a good author.

On the other hand, a teacher busy three-fourths of the day, either in school, or in work connected with it,

needs to consider well before she indulges herself in additional hours of study, even with a view to improving her mind for her teaching, or to actual pleasure in the work. *Her* great duty is to keep the balance even in the other way, that she, too, may have a healthy mind in a healthy body.

A girl wishes to have the reputation of being robust, and she has, perhaps, been so hitherto. If, therefore, she is invited to take a walk of unusual length, or in rough weather, she accepts and goes; although she knows, and is reminded, that, at that particular moment, it is a very unwise thing; and, in many such cases, the girls have injured themselves for life.

Again, with the same ambition, a girl going to some party on a cold winter night, and having a long distance to drive, being already more thinly clad than is right or necessary, refuses to put on the wraps which might protect her; and as this kind of disregard of cold is absolutely weakening, — because it obliges the heat-producing apparatus to labor harder than it should, in supplying again the heat that is carried off from the surface, — even if she does not take cold in the ordinary sense, she enters on a weakened condition, which has, in some cases, ended in serious disorders.

In comparing the present with past times we find, for the eager and excitable, a source of limitation in what may be called our quicker pace of living, the effect of modern invention and enterprise, and of news and information reaching every one daily from the whole round globe. By these means life is made more exciting, the work done is more intense and



- crowded, while, at the same time, a greater amount of personal comfort being diffused, all tends to increase the susceptibility of the nervous system, and to impair its resisting power. We cannot, therefore, keep the habits of our ancestors. The strain being greater, fewer hours should be given to work, and more to rest. We cannot do all our grandparents did, and in addition all our present circumstances tempt us to do. "It cannot be done without one of two things, — early exhaustion, or an alteration of the earth's movements and a day of more hours."¹

It happens not infrequently that from some temporary delicacy in youth, or a sickly childhood, — when character and thought have been brought to bear on the questions of health and future usefulness, — wonderful power has been developed for getting the best out of life.

A young man attacked with hemorrhage from the lungs, accepting the restrictions imposed, instead of fading away in consumption, has adapted his habits to his weakness, and lived to old age, doing noble work for his day and generation, though always living by rule. See, too, in the life of Prescott, the historian, how much he made of his life and talents, in spite of injured eyes, and rheumatism, and dyspepsia. He, too, lived by rule.

In short, if we would be, and do, all that, as rational beings, we should desire, we must resolve to govern ourselves; we must seek diversity of interests; dread to be without an object and without mental occupation; and try to balance work for the body and work for the mind. Thus, adapting ourselves to the

¹ Dr. Fothergill.

ascertained difficulties that surround us, we can build our lives round them, as birds and insects build round the objects which, at first hostile, become harmless, through their instinctive wisdom.

Lose not thyself nor give thy humors way,
God gave them to thee under lock and key.

Therefore let each of us admit to herself that she must recognize limits to her powers, if only as a woman with the inheritances common to her sex, which are a part of the laws of her being. Then, adapting herself with a wise docility, she will get more out of herself, and give more to others, in the life she lengthens and the mind she trains by well-ordered rules, than by heedless indulgence, whether of idleness, or intellectual excitement, or ill-regulated devotion to the drudgery of household labor.

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